



CITY POLICY

POLICY NUMBER: C469A

REFERENCE:

City Council
11 October 1994

ADOPTED BY:

City Council
17 February 2009

SUPERSEDES:

C469

PREPARED BY: Corporate Services Department

DATE: 28 January 2009

TITLE: **Ward Boundary Design Policy**

Policy Statement:

Clear, distinct and easily identifiable ward boundaries are essential to the municipal election process. Ward boundary design should also respect the democratic principle of “one-person, one-vote” by striving to keep ward populations substantially equal.

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. Establish criteria to be used by the Returning Officer in developing proposals for Ward boundary changes.
2. Define the responsibilities in the Ward boundary review process.
3. Provide a framework for the Ward boundary review process with regard to timing, involving stakeholders and establishing reporting procedures.



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1. DEFINITIONS

- 1.01 Community League Boundary - the boundary of a community league as established by the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues.
- 1.02 Electors - eligible voters, as defined by the Local Authorities Election Act.
- 1.03 Population - the total number of people residing within a defined area.
- 1.04 Ward - a municipal electoral district for the purpose of electing members of Council and School Board Trustees, created under the Municipal Government Act and the Ward Boundary Bylaw.

2. CRITERIA

The following criteria are to be used by the Returning Officer in creating or designing Ward boundaries:

2.01 Population vs. Number of Electors

The Population per Ward, not the number of Electors per Ward, will be the primary factor in designing Ward boundaries.

The optimum Population per Ward will be determined by dividing the City Population by the number of Wards. Ward boundaries will be designed so the Population of each Ward is within a range of +/- 25% from the optimum.

The optimum number of Electors per Ward will be determined by dividing the number of Electors in the City by the number of Wards. Ward boundaries will be designed so the number of Electors in each Ward is within a range of +/- 25% from the optimum.

Respecting these "+/-" ranges will ensure that Wards are substantially equal with each other in both Population and number of Electors.

2.02 Future Growth

Ward boundaries are to be designed with the goal of lasting at least three municipal general elections before a major revision is necessary. The potential for growth or decline in each Ward over the next three elections will be taken into account by having the highest Ward Populations and number of Electors in stable or declining Wards and the lowest Ward Populations and number of Electors in growth area Wards.



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2.03 Respecting Community League Boundaries

Since Community Leagues reflect the borders and concerns of neighbourhoods, Ward boundaries are to be designed so no Community League is split between two Wards.

Since Community League Boundaries are not controlled by the City and are subject to change, it may be necessary to make minor modifications to the Ward boundaries prior to the major revision planned for every three (3) municipal general elections.

2.04 Communities of Interest and Diversity Within Wards

Ward boundaries will be designed to ensure communities with common interests or sharing a common roadway access are kept within the same Ward.

Also, where possible, the distribution of residential, commercial, industrial, institutional and green space areas between Wards will be taken into account so that each Ward contains a mixture of these developments.

2.05 Easily Identifiable Boundaries

Wherever possible, Ward boundaries will be readily identifiable to the public by utilizing major streets and significant natural and man-made barriers such as the river, ravines, railways, etc.

2.06 Least Number of Changes

Ward proposals developed by the Returning Officer should involve the fewest changes possible to accomplish the required adjustments.

2.07 Block-Shaped Wards

Ward boundaries are to be designed relatively block-shaped with straight sides. This will help to ensure that Ward boundaries are drawn impartially. Ward boundaries which are long, narrow and twisted, or have saw-toothed or indented sides are more likely to give the appearance of being designed in a biased approach to achieve a specific result.



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3. PROCEDURE

3.01 City Council will:

- (a) Inform the Returning Officer of revisions that are desired to the Ward boundaries;
- (b) Direct the Returning Officer to conduct a formal review of the Ward boundaries and to prepare boundary proposals for the consideration of Council;
- (c) Provide input into the Ward boundary proposals prepared by the Returning Officer, and;
- (d) Decide on any changes to be made to the Ward boundaries and pass the required bylaw by October in the year prior to a municipal general election to provide sufficient implementation time.

3.02 Returning Officer will:

- (a) By September of the year following every municipal general election, send a summary to Council through the Executive Committee identifying
 - the current Population and number of Electors for each Ward,
 - the current "+/-" of Population and number of Electors of each Ward from the optimum Ward size, and
 - potential Ward boundary adjustments required before the next municipal general election;
- (b) When directed by City Council, develop Ward boundary proposals based on the criteria contained in this policy;
- (c) Arrange for input from the following stakeholders to determine the impact of any potential Ward boundary changes;
 - General Public (through a public hearing),
 - Edmonton Public School Board,
 - Edmonton Separate School Board,
 - Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, and
 - City Administration;
- (d) Prepare the bylaw to adopt the accepted Ward boundary changes, and;
- (e) Implement the approved changes to the Ward boundaries.